

NEWS

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Member of Cumberland County Cocaine Trafficking Network Sentenced to 96 Months in Federal Prison

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CAMDEN - A member of a large cocaine trafficking network in Cumberland County was sentenced to 96 months in federal prison today for his role in the conspiracy, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Jerome B. Simandle also ordered Willie Simmons, 29, of Vineland, to pay a \$1,000 fine and to serve four years of supervised release upon completion of his prison sentence. Simmons has been held without bail since his surrender in October 2005.

On July 31, 2007, Simmons pleaded guilty before Judge Simandle to a one-count Superseding Information that charged him with conspiring with Felipe Telleria, 34, a.k.a. "Alex," of Vineland, and others to distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine.

At his plea hearing, Simmons admitted that between July 2004 and October 2005 he agreed with Telleria and others to distribute at least 3.5 kilos of cocaine in the Vineland area. Although Simmons was one of Telleria's lower level customers, he admitted to purchasing between 3.5 and 5 kilograms of cocaine, cooking it into crack cocaine and then redistributing the crack cocaine in southern New Jersey.

Telleria was arrested on July 11, 2006, in Vineland on an earlier one-count Indictment. Telleria pleaded guilty to a one-count Superseding Indictment on March 9, 2007, which charged conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of cocaine and 50 grams or more of crack cocaine. At the time of his plea, Judge Simandle continued Telleria's detention without bail pending sentencing.

The case is the result of a long-term investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Cumberland County Narcotics Task Force.

In determining the sentence, Judge Simandle consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Christie credited the Special Agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerald P. McAleer in Newark; and Investigators with member agencies of the Cumberland County Narcotics Task Force, under the direction of Cumberland County Prosecutor Ronald J. Casella, with developing the investigation which resulted in the Superseding Indictment and Indictments.

The Cumberland County Narcotics Task Force is comprised of the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office, DEA, FBI, ATF, New Jersey State Police, Vineland Police Department, Bridgeton Police Department, Millville Police Department. Additionally, the Cape May Prosecutors Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Robert L. Taylor, and the New Jersey Department of Human Services Police, under the direction Capt. Glenn Garbarino, were thanked for their assistance in the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Diana V. Carrig of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense attorney: Troy A. Archie, Esq. Camden